

Acts 9:1-9

EMC Wednesday Night Bible Study - 2-15-17

Context

III. Foundations for World Mission (6:8-12:24)

- A. Stephen the martyr (6:8-7:60)
- B. Philip the evangelist (8:1-40)
- C. The conversion of Saul (9:1-31)**
- D. The conversion of Cornelius (9:32-11:18)
- E. Expansion and opposition (11:19-12:24)

The Conversion of Saul - Introduction

Distinguish between the _____ vs. _____

- Peculiar: flash of light, audible voice of Jesus, resurrection appearance of Jesus (the last, I Cor. 15:8), commissioning to be an apostle (to the Gentiles)
- Universal: personal encounter with Jesus Christ via a witness to the gospel, surrender to him in repentance and faith, the reception of salvation blessings and incorporation into the church.

Saul's Pre-conversion State in Jerusalem - 9:1-2

His _____ state

- 7:58; 8:1 (cf. 22:20) - approval of Stephen's death
- 8:3 - house to house searches
- 9:1 - "still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord"

His _____ - _____

Luke's language

- Portrays Saul like a wild and ferocious _____
 - 8:3 - "ravaging/destroying" [cf. Ps. 80:13 (LXX) - "ravaging of a body by a wild beast"]
 - 9:21 - "destroyed/mauled"
 - 9:1 - "breathing murderous threats" is like the panting and snorting of wild beasts
 - 26:9-11 - "furiously enraged"
- Points us to the radical nature of God's _____

Saul Meets Jesus on the Damascus Road - 9:3-9

NOT when "Saul becomes Paul"

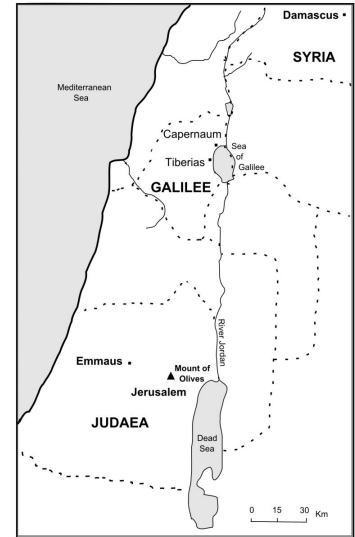
- Cannot be argued from the text itself
- Acts 13:9 - "Saul, who was also called Paul" - He _____ was
- Common custom of _____ names
 - Saul = _____
 - Paul = _____
- Significance of 13:9 ff. - his first _____ journey (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23)
- Meanings of his names:
 - Saul = "inquired of God"
 - Paul = "_____"

V. 4, 5 - "why are you persecuting Me?...I am Jesus whom you are persecuting."

- Jesus identifies _____
- Spiritual _____

Not a _____ conversion

- 26:14 - the "goads"
 - His own internal _____
 - _____
 - Heard?
 - Wisdom in the synagogue (6:9-10)
 - Powerful, Spirit-filled interpretation of the OT story, one that left them all speechless (ch. 7)
 - Testimony (7:56)
 - Plea for forgiveness (7:60)
 - Seen?
 - Illuminated face (6:15)
 - Courageous non-resistance to the mob-like violence (7:58-60)
 - The spread of the church even in the face of persecution
 - "Fanaticism is only found in individuals who are compensating for secret doubts."
 - _____
 - Phil. 3:6 - external righteousness vs. Romans 7
 - Neither power nor peace



Not a _____ conversion

- The grace of God:
 - _____ - true righteousness and holiness
 - _____ - death to life
 - _____ us to respond positively to him
- Not overriding his _____ or his _____

John Stott: "The cause of Saul's conversion was grace, the sovereign grace of God. But sovereign grace is gradual grace and gentle grace. Gradually, and without violence, Jesus pricked Saul's mind and conscience with his goads. Then he revealed himself to him by the light and the voice, not in order to overwhelm him, but in such a way as to enable him to make a free response. Divine grace does not trample on human personality. Rather the reverse, for it enables human beings to be truly human. It is sin which imprisons; it is grace which liberates. The grace of God so frees us from the bondage of our pride, prejudice, and self-centeredness as to enable us to repent and believe."

Summary

- Personal encounter > repentance and faith > blessing and incorporation
- Before and after grace
- Reality of prevenient grace
- The personalizing Person